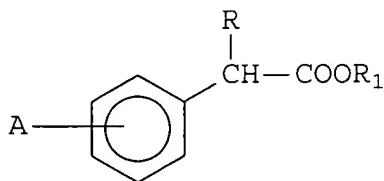


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of meta or para-substituted  $\alpha$ -arylalkanoic acids of formula (I):



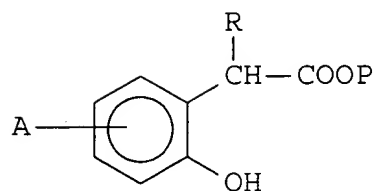
(I)

wherein[:]

R is hydrogen; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl; R<sub>1</sub> is hydrogen, straight or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl, phenyl, p-nitrophenyl, a cation of an alkali or alkaline-earth metal cation or of a pharmaceutically acceptable ammonium salt; A is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, aryl, aryloxy, arylcarbonyl, 2-, 3- or 4-pyridocarbonyl, aryl optionally substituted with one or more alkyl, hydroxy, amino, cyano, nitro, alkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkoxy; A is at the meta or para positions;

which process comprises the following steps:

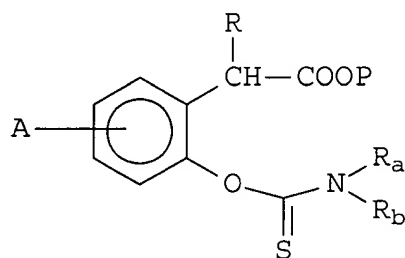
- a) ~~transformation~~ reaction of compounds of formula (II)



(II)

in which P is straight or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl, phenyl, p-nitrophenyl,

~~into~~ with a thiocarbonyl halide to give compounds of formula (III)

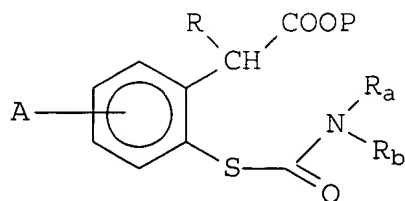


(III)

wherein

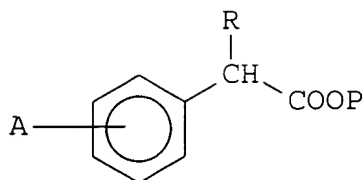
R<sub>a</sub> and R<sub>b</sub> are C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl

b) thermal rearrangement of compound (III) to give (IIIb)



(IIIb)

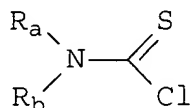
c) catalytic hydrogenation of (IIIb) to give (IIIc)



(IIIc)

d) transformation hydrolysis of (IIIc) and optional subsequent reesterfication or salification to give into (I).

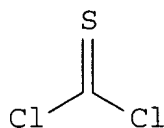
2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, in which the transformation of step a) is carried out by reaction of the compound (II) with



wherein  $R_a$  and  $R_b$  are as defined in claim 1, in the presence of an organic or inorganic base.

3. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 2, in which said organic base is selected from triethylamine and pyridine, and said inorganic base is selected from alkali or alkaline-earth carbonates.

4. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, in which the transformation of step a) is carried out by reaction of compound (II) with thiophosgene

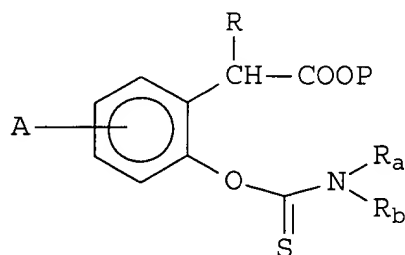


and the subsequent reaction of the resulting product with  $\text{HNR}_a\text{R}_b$ , wherein  $\text{R}_a$  and  $\text{R}_b$  are as defined in claim 1.

5. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1, in which the hydrogenation of step c) is carried out with Ni-Raney.

6. (Original) A process according to any one of the above claims, in which the group A of formula (I) is meta-benzoyl and R is methyl.

7. (Currently Amended) As a reaction intermediate, the compound

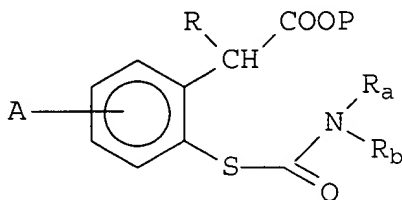


(III)

wherein [:]

R is hydrogen, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl; A is a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, aryl, aryloxy, aryl optionally substituted with one or more alkyl, hydroxy, amino, cyano, nitro, alkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkoxy, A is at the meta or para positions; P is straight or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl, phenyl, p-nitrophenyl; R<sub>a</sub> and R<sub>b</sub> are C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl.

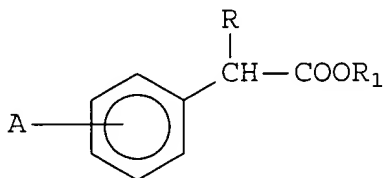
8. (Original) As a reaction intermediate, the compound



(IIIb)

wherein A, R, P, R<sub>a</sub> and R<sub>b</sub> are as defined in claim 7.

9. (New) A process for the preparation of meta or para-substituted  $\alpha$ -arylalkanoic acids of formula (I):

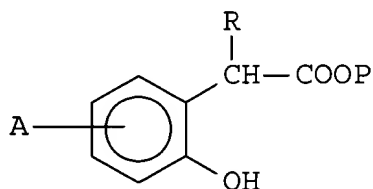


(I)

wherein R is hydrogen; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl; R<sub>1</sub> is hydrogen, straight or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl, phenyl, p-nitrophenyl, a cation of an alkali or alkaline-earth metal cation or of a pharmaceutically acceptable ammonium salt; A is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, aryl, aryloxy, arylcarbonyl, 2-, 3- or 4- pyridocarbonyl, aryl optionally substituted with one or more alkyl, hydroxy, amino, cyano, nitro, alkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkoxy; A is at the meta or para positions;

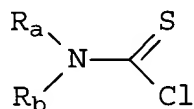
wherein said process comprises the steps of:

a) reaction of compounds of formula (II)

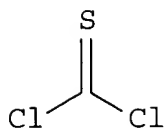


(II)

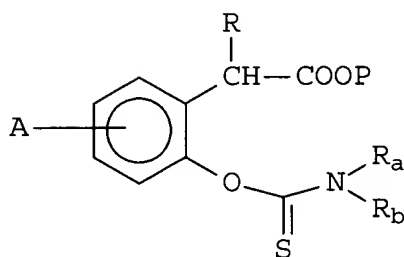
in which P is straight or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl, phenyl, p-nitrophenyl, with the compound



wherein R<sub>a</sub> and R<sub>b</sub> are C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl, in the presence of an organic or inorganic base, or  
with a thiophosgene



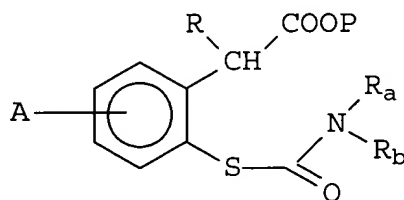
and the subsequent reaction of the resulting product with  $\text{HNR}_a\text{R}_b$ , wherein  $\text{R}_a$  and  $\text{R}_b$  are as defined above, to give compounds of formula (III)



(III)

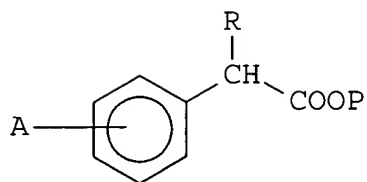
wherein  $\text{R}_a$  and  $\text{R}_b$  are as defined above,

b) thermal rearrangement of compound (III) to give (IIIb)



(IIIb)

c) catalytic hydrogenation of (IIIb) to give (IIIc)



(IIIc)

d) hydrolysis of (IIIc) and optional subsequent reesterfication  
or salification to give (I).